

# **I LIVE TO SERVE**

**A Promise and A Fulfilment**

---

## ***Intimate Glimpses into Gurudev Sivananda's Last Days***



**How the Holy Master Lived a Life  
Of Unremitting Service Very End**

**RECORDED BY N. ANANTHANARAYANAN**

# **I LIVE TO SERVE**

## **A PROMISE AND FULFILMENT**

---

**Intimate Glimpses into Gurudev Sivananda's Last Days**



**How the Holy Master Lived a Life of  
Unremitting Service to the Very End**

---

**Recorded by N. Ananthanarayanan**

First Edition: 1965

Internet Edition: 2005

[www.divinelifesociety.org](http://www.divinelifesociety.org)

**FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION ONLY**



The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

P.O. Sivanandanagar, Dist. Tehri-Garhwal, U.A. India

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED BY THE DIVINE LIFE TRUST SOCIETY

Published by Swami Krishnananda for the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy (The Divine Life Society), Sivanandanagar, and printed by him at the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy Press, Sivanandanagar, Dist. Tehri-Garhwal, U.A., Himalayas

*In Loving Memory  
Of the Most Holy One*

## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE**

When the holy Master Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj discarded his physical sheath in July 1963, letters came pouring in from devotees everywhere desiring us to convey to them details of Gurudev's last days. At that time, preoccupied as we all were in the Ashram with diverse matters of immediate consequence, we could not meet the wishes of the devotees in full measure. We did publish details of Gurudev's illness, the treatment given to him, his Mahasamadhi and the ceremonies which followed; but we could give only an outline of his last days.

Now we present in the following pages a more detailed account of the touching incidents which filled the Master's life during the period immediately preceding his Mahasamadhi. Through a critical portrayal of these incidents, the author, an inmate of the Ashram, has vividly brought out many of the characteristic traits in Gurudev's personality which captured the heart of his wide circle of devotees.

We have pleasure in releasing this small booklet in the New Year in hallowed memory of Gurudev.

Sivanandanagar,

January 5, 1965

—*Publishers*

# **I LIVE TO SERVE A PROMISE AND A FULFILMENT**



## PROPHECY THAT BECAME TRUE



CHIMES, that beautiful psychic monthly published from California, U.S.A, after paying a warm tribute to Gurudev Sivananda whom it described as “the beloved world teacher”, went on to point out in its November, 1963 issue: “Almost prophetic is the exquisite verse appearing on the cover of the July issue of the Journal .... the month in which he passed on.”

The Journal referred to by CHIMES was the Divine Life Magazine and I pulled out my July, 1963 copy from the shelf. Besides a neat, graceful picture of Gurudev, with a garland on his neck and a halo surrounding his face, were printed these words:

*“The rivers are restless. They find rest only after joining the ocean, their source. Water gets evaporated from the ocean and forms clouds. Clouds pour down as rain water. The rain water in the hill becomes the rivers. Therefore, the ocean is the cause for the rivers. Even so, the restless Jiva or the individual soul can find its rest only when it joins its cause, viz., Brahman or the Eternal Being.”*

The July issue of the Divine Life Magazine was released on July 1, 1963. Gurudev entered the Cosmos on July 14, 1963. No wonder the CHIMES magazine called the inscription on the Divine Life Magazine cover “prophetic”!

### **THE MASTER DID GIVE MANY INDICATIONS, BUT ..... THE DEVOTEES DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE**

About three years ago, at an open night-Satsang in the Ashram, a visitor was talking to Gurudev after Arati was over. I was standing close by. The visitor said something about his own retirement and Gurudev exclaimed, in return, “Have I retired? Or am I retiring?” The words could be interpreted in many ways, but they fell on my ears with an ominous sound.

One day, in May 1962, coming out of the Diamond Jubilee Hall after the morning Satsang, Swamiji sat for the camera with a devotee. After the picture was taken, the devotee thanked Gurudev, took leave and went away. The few people who were around that day were also preoccupied in their own way. In that brief moment, Gurudev who was sitting alone in his chair, abruptly turned to me and said, “*Na Ham..Na Tum. Daftar Gum.,*” and he went his way. It was a favourite expression of Swamiji. Gurudev had voiced it many times before to many persons to convey the Vedantic ultimate that the world ceases to exist for the man who attains the Turiya state. The literal meaning of what Gurudev said would be: “Neither do I exist nor you. The office has vanished for ever.”

But, strange to say, that day Gurudev’s abrupt utterance, intentionally directed perhaps, made such an impact on me that for a second time I felt uncertain and unhappy.

That same year, on September 8, during his Birthday celebrations, Gurudev was extremely hesitant to invite the assembled devotees for the next year’s Birthday celebrations, though each year it was his usual wont to do so.

The clearest indication of what was in store for us, an indication which is now too well-known to devotees of Gurudev, was the holy Master's open invitation at a night-Satsang early in 1963 to all those who wished to be initiated into Sannyas to get initiated on the Sivaratri Day of 1963 itself. "Who knows what may happen next Sivaratri?" Gurudev is reported to have said. When someone among his devotees suggested that Swamiji should not say such things, Gurudev silenced the person saying, "Oh, keep quiet. You don't know anything."

## **WHEN GENEROUS GURUDEV BEGAN TO TIGHTEN HIS PURSE-STRING**

About three months prior to his Mahasamadhi, Gurudev had suddenly become rather serious-minded in his attitude to men and matters. His deeds were unusual.

Take, for instance, the economy drive which Gurudev instituted at about this time in the administration of the Ashram. It was difficult to understand how our extravagantly generous Gurudev could impose cuts in the small allowances of the Ashram workers. But he did it. And he slashed many other items of Ashram expenditure, big and small, with such meticulous care that Ashram debts fell steeply in just a month's time! But Gurudev did it all so jokingly ('Economy, Sir', 'Economy, Sir', he used to say whenever anyone went to him with an indent) that we could not sense a deeper purpose behind his action. It is clear now, in retrospect, that he was trying to set the Ashram straight before saying 'Good-bye', but we did not understand it that way at that time.

## **THE TRANSITION FROM PADA-PUJA TO PADUKA-PUJA**

Early in 1963 Gurudev had asked Swami Santanandaji to get from Mysore a pair of sandalwood Padukas, with silver covering. Immediately a letter was written, but no reply came. The matter was forgotten, but after twenty days, Gurudev again spoke to Santanandaji about the Padukas. The Mysore people were reminded and the Padukas were received. Swami Devanandaji put them inside the almirah, and nobody gave a second thought to the Padukas.

Soon after, during one Pada Puja, unexpectedly Gurudev asked Devanandaji to bring those Padukas and keep them under his feet. They were brought out. Gurudev then placed his holy lotus feet over those Mysore sandalwood Padukas and the Pada Puja was gone through in that manner. It was at once a Pada Puja and a Paduka Puja.

During the next Pada Puja again, exactly when the worship was about to commence, Swamiji reminded Devanandaji to bring the Padukas; and only after they were brought and placed under his feet did Gurudev give the signal for the Puja to start.

Afterwards also, whenever a Pada Puja to Gurudev was to be performed, the Ashram workers invariably forgot about the 'new' Padukas, but each time Gurudev carefully remembered and reminded them to bring. This happened

almost four or five times. Why was the holy Master particular about the Padukas? Today we know. Then we knew not.

Thanks to Gurudev's intense love for us all and his concern for our spiritual welfare, today we have with us the holy Padukas specially and consciously sanctified by him.

### **THE 'CALENDAR' EPISODE**

On several occasions during May and June of the final year, 1963, Swamiji called for the calendar, each time from a different person attending on him. Once it was Devananda, another time it was Kalyanananda, the third time it was Santananda. "Is it the Spiritual Calendar, Swamiji?" Swami Kalyanananda asked Gurudev on one such occasion. "Oh, no. Ordinary date calendar," said Swamiji. Kalyananandaji was puzzled.

On one occasion, the Master flung the calendar sheets right up to June at one stroke and was looking into July. Swami Santananda wondered and asked Gurudev, "What is it, Swamiji?" Gurudev said, "Oh, you don't know," and after fingering through the dates, returned the calendar to him. Whoever knew at that time that the Mahapurusha was fixing the auspicious date and time for his own Mahasamadhi!

### **HOW MUCH HAVE I GIVEN? HOW LONG WILL IT RUN?**

Since May, 1963, immediately after return from the morning Satsang, Gurudev began to have his voice tape-recorded daily. He would read loudly, forcefully, inspiringly—unmindful of the strain—from his printed books and typed sheets, and Santanandaji would record them on the tape. Gurudev was very particular about this item of work in his daily routine. He did it without fail, without wasting a minute.

Usually, Gurudev used to record for five, six minutes. One day, hardly had he read for two or three minutes, when the tape ended. Gurudev was not satisfied. Swami Santanandaji understood it. He suggested that he would bring a new tape and put it on. That day it was already late for Gurudev to go in, but he waited for full ten minutes before the tape was brought and he recorded for some more minutes to complete the day's quota. Only then was he satisfied.

Once in ten days, Swamiji would ask, "How much matter have I given? How long will it run?" He was so, so eager to serve humanity even after he was gone from physical view.

### **A FLOOD OF INSPIRING ARTICLES**

This unusually intense desire of Gurudev to serve people found outlet in many ways. It is well known that Swamiji was regularly sending articles to magazines and journals for publication. This he was doing as a vital part of his programme



for dissemination of spiritual knowledge. And during the two or three months preceding his Mahasamadhi, Gurudev sent a very large number of articles to an equally large number of journals. Service unto the last! The maximum good to the maximum number!!—these seem to have been the dominant motivating factors of the holy Master’s life from beginning to end.

### **A STATEMENT AND A GLANCE: GURUDEV GIVES ONE MORE INDICATION**

Several times during the tape-recording days, the Master expressed sentiments such as these: “The sight is getting dim. Take whatever you want (*on the tape*) now itself. The hearing is getting dull. Tell whatever you want to tell now itself. The tongue is getting inarticulate. Ask whatever you want to ask now itself.” As Gurudev was signing the Dak one day, he said, rather jokingly, “Sight is getting dim. Hereafter I can’t sign, Sir,” and he glanced at the Swami who took the letters to him as if to ascertain whether the latter had understood him and the implication of what he said.

### **THE LAST SATSANG**

21<sup>st</sup> June, 1963 was to prove the last day that Gurudev attended the morning Satsang in the Diamond Jubilee Hall. After the Satsang was over, he came out as usual, and as he neared the neem tree outside the cashier’s office, he stopped and looked around at the group of devotees following him. Sri Chaman Lal of Chandausi, retired Principal, Sri Murari Lal, advocate from Lucknow and Dr. Devaki Kutty of Lucknow were all there. Swamiji said, with his characteristic sense of humour, “Oh, the *Viman* is going to arrive from Brahmaloaka. Who are all coming?” Murari Lalji at once said, “Swamiji, I’ll follow.” Dr. Kutty did not reply, but just smiled. Swamiji also smiled and told her, “Hum, after some time.” But, so far as Gurudev himself was concerned, the *Viman* was to come just twenty-three days hence. Gurudev knew this well, but the innocent devotees knew not. Their thoughts were too full of the Master’s love to find time to interpret his words. Their dear Master was standing right there in their midst, cheerful and smiling, pouring forth love on all. That was sufficient for the devotees. They cared not for the rest.

### **“I MAY BE ILL, BUT I CANNOT STOP MY WORK!”**

Back in his Kutir from that morning Satsang, Gurudev developed, in the course of the day, a pain in the hip-joint; and much as he wished, he could not go to the night-Satsang. Diathermy was administered to him and some medicine was given.

The next day, June 22, though Gurudev did not go to the office, he attended to his correspondence, dispatch of free book packets and other work in his Kutir itself. He talked freely to revered Swami Chidanandaji and to Swami Devanandaji’s parents who had come to the Ashram the previous day. But Gurudev suffered more pain at night.

And the day after that also, Gurudev came to the Verandah of his Kutir to see the Dak and tape-record the day's quota of spiritual exhortation. He also dictated to Swami Santanandaji, but went in a little earlier than usual. His pain increased considerably and he was examined by Dr. O.P. Kapur.

### **THE HOLY MASTER'S LAST DICTATION**

Perhaps the most vital part of Gurudev's service to humanity was his daily, morning "worship" with pen and paper. For decades, Gurudev wrote regularly, sharing his rich experiences and sublime thoughts with the wide world. Every day he sat at his desk, at a fixed time in the morning. This was a 'must' with him, just as 'eating, drinking and sleeping' are a 'must' with most men and women. The wide range of Sivananda Literature which is giving so much spiritual solace to the world today is the direct outcome of this Jnana Yajna of Gurudev, performed every morning. About two months prior to his Mahasamadhi, however, physical inability compelled Gurudev to stop writing with his own hand and made him dictate instead. Swami Santanandaji used to take down the dictation.

One day, Swamiji was dictating as usual. After a few sentences, he said, "Happiness comes when the individual merges in God." There was a pause. Santanandaji waited, thinking that Swamiji would say something more. But Gurudev said nothing. After a few seconds had passed thus in silence, Santanandaji asked Gurudev whether he would proceed with the dictation. "*Porum*", said Swamiji in cryptic Tamil. It meant, "Enough".

"Happiness comes when the individual merges in God": that was the last dictated sentence of holy Master Sivananda, author of hundreds of inspiring books on diverse topics related to man and his destiny. Gurudev had summed up his teachings in that one sentence. And he was soon to practise what he preached. He was to merge in God totally, within weeks of the above utterance.

"Happiness comes when the individual merges in God": that forms the concluding sentence in the book "**Elixir Divine**" which contains the aphoristic dictations of Gurudev for many weeks prior to the date of stoppage of dictation. The book has been printed in tens of thousands and has already found its way to many a distant corner of the globe.

### **GURUDEV FONDLES A NEW BOOK FROM HIS SICK-BED**

On the midnight of June 23-24, Gurudev wanted to go to the bath-room, but found one leg almost paralysed. In spite of it, Gurudev came out to the verandah on the 24<sup>th</sup> morning, at his usual hour. But clearly, he was not well. He had high blood-pressure and could talk only with great difficulty. In that condition, he still wished to tape-record a little, but Doctor Mother gently persuaded him to desist from the attempt.

It had been arranged earlier that the Annaprasana ceremony of a devotee's child was to be performed that day in Sri Gurudev's holy presence. Sweet Kheer had been made for the occasion and the ceremonial first feeding of cereals to the child was gone through as scheduled. Gurudev blessed the child.

When the Annaprasana function was over, Swami Dayanandaji of the Ashram Press came to Gurudev and presented him with the first copy of a fresh edition of Gurudev's "Kundalini Yoga". Gurudev took the book in his hands, and full of appreciation and admiration for its neat get-up, fondled it as a mother would fondle her new baby. But, as Gurudev tried to turn its pages, the onlooker could see the holy Master's hand visibly shaking. Unmindful of the handicap, Swamiji made a few cheerful comments about the book, said that nobody had written a book like that, and went in to take his food.

At the lunch table, again, Gurudev could not pick up the hand-towel with his left hand when he attempted to do so. Nor could he do his usual salutations to holy Mother Ganges after taking food. Up till then, Gurudev had been in the habit of doing Pranam to Ganges many times daily. This he would do through the open window as soon as he got up from bed in the morning, before taking breakfast, after taking lunch and before going to bed. It was unfortunate that the Master had to be satisfied now with mental prostration to his beloved Mother Bhagirathi.

As Gurudev retired to bed on the night of June 24, his face was red and his eyes were swollen.

### **GURUDEV DISPLAYS DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

At about half-past ten on the morning of June 25, doctors from Lucknow and Dehra Dun examined Gurudev. Swamiji attempted to speak, but his articulation was not distinct. The doctor from Dehra Dun mildly suggested to Gurudev: "Swamiji, you should not worry about anything. You should not think anything." Quick came Gurudev's answer: "Oh, how can it be possible? I've to think of many things. I've to look after many people."

That was only one facet of the Master's extraordinary personality, a facet which showed the Shepherd's concern for his flock. The other facet, the transcendental consciousness of the Divinity that was Sivananda, was quite apparent. A year earlier, Gurudev had remarked to a disciple in the course of a conversation, "I cannot think," hinting thereby that he had attained a realm where thought failed to reach and where the mind was no more.

Round about noon, Col. M.S. Rao, seniormost doctor, then personal physical to Union President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, came racing from Delhi to examine Gurudev. President Radhakrishnan, who had called on Swamiji only a few months earlier and spent a pleasant hour with him, was concerned about Swamiji's health and had readily and graciously agreed to Col. Rao's coming to see Gurudev.

"How are you, Swamiji?": to this kind enquiry made by Col. Rao, Gurudev replied, "I am perfectly all right." It was characteristic of Swamiji. Whenever a visitor greeted Gurudev and enquired about his health, Swamiji would invariably say, "Most wonderful!" How else could it be for one who was all the time in unbroken communion with the Lord?

Gurudev conversed affably with the doctor and took his usual food. While he was still eating, Smt. Vani Bai Ram of Delhi came to see him. Swamiji greeted her in his own way: “*Vani Saraswati Vak Devi, Bhagavati Bharati Mam Pahi*”.

### **SWAMIJI FINDS OUT THE DOCTOR’S RUSE**

Gurudev took no food on the evening of June 25. About this date also, it was noticed that Swamiji was not able to swallow easily the rather large-sized medicinal tablets. To get over this difficulty, Doctor Mother powdered the tablets and mixing the powder with honey into a smooth paste, took it to Gurudev. “Where are the tablets?” asked Swamiji, and when told that the doctors had changed their prescription and given powder instead of tablets, he crisply retorted, “This is all doctor’s ruse?” He had rightly guessed that the tablets had been powdered. After all, was he not himself a doctor once, and that too, a busy doctor?

### **“OUR CHILDREN! OUR CHILDREN!!”**

From about June 29, Gurudev showed encouraging signs of environmental awareness. On June 30, at about half past five in the evening, Swami Devananandaji was standing near Gurudev’s cot. Gurudev asked him, in a sweet mixture of Tamil and Telugu, “*Biddalu Ellam Enge? Where are all the children?*” Devananandaji could not understand. “What children, Swamiji?” he asked. “*Namma Biddalu, Namma Biddalu*” said Gurudev, “Our children, our children”. Devananda Swamiji satisfied Gurudev saying that the disciples who were in close attendance on Gurudev were all resting in the front verandah.

The disciples may forget the Guru, but the Guru never forgets the disciple.

### **HIS BODY WAS SICK, BUT HIS SPIRIT WAS CHEERFUL**

One day as Swamiji was taking food, Dr. Devaki Kutty and Dr. Adhwaryoo came to see him. They wanted to watch, in particular, how far Gurudev was able to chew with his half-paralysed face and mouth. But Swamiji put them at ease, not by a demonstration of perfect chewing, but by cutting a joke and making them laugh. He took some food in his right hand and saying, “This is for Ramunni Nair” (that was Dr. Devaki Kutty’s father who was in Lucknow at that time) put it into his own mouth. The two doctors could not help laughing, and Gurudev smiled mischievously too.

### **THE MASTER’S MYSTERIOUS UPADESH ON HOLY GURU PURNIMA**

July 6, 1963. Guru Purnima Day. No one was allowed inside Gurudev’s Kutir to have physical Darshan of the holy Master. Senior Sannyasin disciples of Gurudev, Ashram inmates, and visiting devotees joined together and solemnly celebrated the sacred occasion in the Ashram premises outside.

About 3 o’clock in the afternoon, Swami Devananandaji helped Gurudev to turn from one side to the other upon his bed, and as he did so, asked if Gurudev

wanted anything. “Nothing,” said the Master, and after a while, recited the following lines from the Brahma Sutras of Bhagavan Vyasa and the Yoga Darshana of Maharshi Patanjali.

*Tattu Samanvayaat*

(BRAHMA SUTRAS, I.1.4)

*Tasya Vachakah Pranavah*

(YOGA DARSHANA, 1.27)

*Sa Tu Deerghakala-Nairantarya Satkaaraasevito Dridhabhoomih*

(YOGA DARSHANA, 1.14)

Could it be that compassionate Gurudev was giving us all holy Upadesh on the most auspicious and most eventful Guru Purnima Day through these utterances? I looked into the texts. The literal meanings of the Sutras run somewhat as follows:

Brahman is the main purport of all Vedantic texts.

(BRAHMA SUTRAS, I.1.4)

The sacred syllable OM connotes Him.

(YOGA DARSHANA, 1.27)

Practice becomes fixed, steady when practised for a long time, without any break, and with perfect devotion.

(YOGA DARSHANA, 1.14)

Could anyone give us better Upadesh? And in such succinct manner? In those three Sutras, Gurudev had told us that Brahman was the Goal and to attain the Goal, we should repeat OM and practise Sadhana for a long period with Shraddha and Bhakti.

The Guru has taught and left. It is now for the disciples to obey, to practise and attain.

## **GURUDEV’S LASTING INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF EACH INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLE**

As Gurudev’s physical condition showed improvement the Ashram authorities began to be liberal in allowing visitors inside his Kutir. On one such occasion, Gurudev’s attention was drawn to Sri V., a devotee from Madurai in the South. On seeing him, Swamiji at once asked: “What about your sister’s marriage?” Swami Sivananda was familiar with the individual personal problems of

innumerable devotees. He remembered those problems in separate compartments of his memory, treated them as his own, and helped in every case. Thousands liked him as much for this intensely human nature as for his spiritual guidance.

### **“SERVE. LOVE. GIVE. PURIFY. MEDITATE. REALISE.”**

Since about Guru Purnima Day, Gurudev began to show increasing awareness of his surroundings. He talked cheerfully, though imperfectly still. He recognised people.

So, on July 8, the Master was brought out in a wheel-chair to the verandah, the doors of the verandah opening out on to the Ganges were thrown open, and Gurudev was able to gaze and drink his fill of the beauty of the holy river to his heart's content. Ganges Darshan was a spiritual feast to him always.

Swamiji sat gazing at the Ganges for almost half an hour, as a small group of devotees stood round him in silence. The physical condition of the Master presented an improved appearance and some of the devotees wanted to see how far the Master was now able to use his limbs. Paper, spectacles and pen were brought. The Master wrote in legible hand: “Serve, love, meditate, realise.” The sheet of paper on which Gurudev inscribed those immortal words is now one of the most prized possessions of Dr. Adhwaryoo of Virnagar, Gujarat.

### **THE PICTURE OF A SAGE IN SAHAJA SAMADHI**

During his illness, Gurudev's condition looked so pathetic for an onlooker: one eye of his was closed, the mouth was twisted sideward, he could not talk properly, one leg was completely paralysed. Day and night for several days, Gurudev had to lie on the same bed. Evacuation of bowels and kidneys had to be done from the bed itself. And every time Swamiji had to ease himself, it was a strain for him. Despite so much bodily suffering, not once did Gurudev murmur or express feelings of dejection. On the other hand, at every opportunity, he cut jokes bringing out boisterous laughter from those who were nursing him. His inner cheerfulness and joy were manifest in all that he said and did. He was completely disconnected from his physical body.

Gurudev's body position had to be changed once in two hours. Sometimes he would be made to lie on his right side, sometimes on his left, sometimes on the back. Each time his body was handled thus, he must have suffered excruciating pain, but not once did a remark escape Swamiji's lips over what was done to his ailing body. Nor did his face reveal any painful expression. To the sage in Sahaja Samadhi. The body was but a log of wood.

### **GURUDEV'S GENTEEL MANNERS AND INBORN KINDNESS LAST TILL HIS LAST BREATH**

In health and in sickness, Gurudev was the same. Even during the days of his illness, his genteel manners and natural kindness suffered no change. All who went to him felt his irresistible love, the same as ever.

When the horologist Swami Nityanandaji went to him, Gurudev asked, “Has mother come?” Whenever Nityanandaji came to Rishikesh, he used to bring his mother along with him, and Gurudev remembered that.

When his beloved disciple Pannalalji came, after a long interval of two and a half years, Swamiji greeted him with love: “It is a long time since I saw you.” As Pannalalji devoutly prostrated and stood up, Gurudev patted him many times on the back so much as to say, “Be bold. Keep courageous.” And tears trickled down his eyes.<sup>1</sup>

On seeing Swami Madhavanandaji one day, Gurudev asked him about his rheumatic pains and made some kind enquiries about his health. Similarly, when he spoke to Dr. Padma Mudholkar of the Bombay Divine Life Society Branch, Gurudev made eager enquiries about the progress of their Branch magazine, “Siva Jyoti”. Swamiji always showed keen interest, genuine interest, in the happiness and welfare of *other* people; he never once discussed his own illness.

### **A MYSTIC UTTERANCE**

Once Gurudev was being turned in his bed. It was a real big task for those who did it, in as much as they had to handle Gurudev’s large and ailing physical frame.

A little while after he was put on his back, Gurudev called out: “Oh, Saravanabhava,<sup>2</sup> ointment is falling from above. Each one take a tube.” At what exalted level of consciousness Gurudev was at that time, human mind cannot conceive. We can only take Gurudev’s words to mean that God’s love fills everywhere and at all times, and that it is for us to drink of it as much as we like.

### **SWAMIJI SILENTLY ENJOYS A NADASVARAM RECITAL ....WANTS HIS THANKS TO BE CONVEYED TO THE ARTISTE**

One night, when Gurudev was confined to bed, the radio was playing soft music in the adjacent room. It was Saturday night and a famous South Indian musician played on the Nadasvaram in the National Programme. Those who were attending or Gurudev were not even certain whether he was asleep or in a semi-conscious state. But, mark their pleasant surprise when at the end of the recital, Gurudev opened his eyes and beckoned to a Swami nearby and said, “Oh, write to the artiste that I enjoyed his recital. *Convey my thanks to him.*”

“Music as Yoga” is the title of one of Gurudev’s immortal books.

---

<sup>1</sup> On more than one occasion during his last days of ailment, Gurudev Sivananda showed in this way his feelings of affection for some of his dear disciples. Swamiji knew his time was near and was obviously feeling sad to have to leave the devotees who worked so selflessly and with so much love for him and his mission.

<sup>2</sup> The Name of the Lord in His aspect of Kartikeya, the six-headed child of Siva and Parvati.

## **GURUDEV RECEIVES THE UNION HEALTH MINISTER**

Four, five days prior to Gurudev's Mahasamadhi the Union Health Minister Dr. Sushila Nayyar called on Gurudev. With all his physical disability, Gurudev exchanged a few words of friendly greeting with her, chanted the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra for *her* health and welfare, gave her his exquisite sermon of "Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realise", and *invoked the Lord's blessings on her*. He also introduced Doctor Mother Hridayananandaji to the Health Minister, ask books and breakfast to be given to the distinguished guest, and after Dr. Hridayananandaji and Dr. Nayyar had left to go round the Ashram's Eye Hospital, verified once again from Swami Devanandaji that the Health Minister had been served Uppuma and coffee. "Have you taken?" Gurudev asked Swami Devanandaji in the end. "Yes, Swamiji," assured Devanandaji.

At noon, Doctor Mother came once again to give sponge bath and lunch to Gurudev. She mentioned to Swamiji that the Union Health Minister had promised a van and some financial grant for the Eye Hospital. Gurudev quietly heard what she said and remarked, with feelings of almost paternal pride, "Oh, she is Sushila Nayyar....she is Chellamma Nayar<sup>3</sup>." Once again, the beloved Master shed a few tear-drops of Prem.

## **THE MASTER'S LOVE FOR GANGES DARSHAN**

Three or four days before his Mahasamadhi, Gurudev expressed a desire to see the Ganges from where he lay on his sick bed. From the position of the bed as it was at that time, he could not have Darshan of holy Mother Bhagirathi, because of the obstruction of an intervening wall. At Gurudev's request, therefore, the bed was so rearranged to enable Swamiji to view the holy Tirtha which he so much loved, on whose sacred banks he had lived for thirty years and more, and on whose glory he had written a special book itself, named "MOTHER GANGES".

## **THE LAST WRITTEN WORDS OF THE HOLY MASTER**

On July 12, while Swamiji was sitting in the verandah on his wheel-chair, Dr. Devaki Kutty gave paper and pen to Swamiji. Gurudev wrote: "Remember. Forget". Those who held the paper-pad for Gurudev to write raised the pad thinking that he might write more. But Swamiji gestured as if to say, "Take it away. That is sufficient." Then Gurudev turned to Dr. Kutty and said, "Remember you are Devi. And not Devaki Kutty." First a piece of written Upadesh and then a verbal explanation of that Upadesh to ensure correct understanding. That was love heaped upon love!

## **SILK SAREE FOR THE NURSE**

That same day, i.e., July 12, there was Paduka Puja by Dr. Adhwaryoo. During the Puja, beloved Chidananda Swamiji recited Guru Stotras with feeling. All followed.

---

<sup>3</sup> Dr. (Mrs.) Chellamma Nayar was the pre-Sannyas name of Mother Hridayananandaji.



As the Puja went on, tears seemed to trickle from Gurudev's eyes at the thought of having to part from worthy disciples whom he greatly loved. When the Puja was over, Gurudev told Dr. Adhwaryoo, "Invite him (pointing to Chidananda Swamiji) for this year's 8<sup>th</sup> September celebrations in Gujarat."

After a while, Gurudev was given a sponge bath by Km. Sundara Behn, a nurse who had been attending on Swamiji since some days. It was a Friday. As a token of his gratitude for her devoted service, Gurudev presented the nurse a silk saree specially bought for the purpose. It was almost a sacred principle with Gurudev that he never allowed the slightest service to go unrewarded.

### **SWAMIJI'S CONCERN FOR THE ASHRAM WORKERS**

On the evening of July 12, while massage was being administered to Gurudev, some of the Ashram workers who had been attending on him since his illness, were standing nearby ready to do any service at the slightest hint. Gurudev noticed them and he asked Doctor Mother, "Who are these people?" She replied that they were working and that Swamiji would get better soon. On hearing that the people around him were workers, Gurudev remarked rather wistfully, "I've no money to give salary for you people." "We're getting everything, Swamiji," Doctor Mother tried to assure him.

### **A LAST, LINGERING LOOK.... AND FAREWELL TO GANGES!**

On the morning of July 13, Gurudev did not take his full breakfast, but was content with an *Iddili*, a little mango-juice and milk. At 10 o'clock, as usual, he was brought to the verandah. Normally he sat there for half an hour, but that day he rested for just about ten minutes with a straight gaze intently fixed on the Ganges and thereafter he abruptly called Swami Santanandaji and said, "Well, go inside." He was taken in.

The same afternoon Gurudev had an attack of diarrhoea, and free functioning of the kidneys.

### **AT DEAD OF NIGHT ... GURUDEV WRITES**

ॐ ॐ ॐ

During the time that Gurudev was ill in bed, it had become a routine at night to turn him from one side to the other every two hours so that he might not develop bed sore on account of persistent pressure on one side of his body. A little after mid-night on July 12-13, when Swami Devanandaji took over the watch, he saw that Swamiji was not sleeping, but repeatedly writing ॐ on his right thigh with his finger, then keeping quiet for a while, and then again writing in the same manner. There were two fans working in the room, besides an air-conditioning unit. Devanandaji was concerned that Gurudev might suffer an exposure and covered the Master's hand with cloth when the latter was not writing. But Gurudev quickly threw the cloth aside and resumed his writing. When he stopped, Devanandaji would put the cloth again, only to be thrown away by

Gurudev who would start writing ॐ. Swamiji's hand was thus covered almost a dozen times and a dozen times Gurudev threw the covering cloth away. After 2 A.M. that night, the holy Master slept a little.

### **SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OR SUPER-CONSCIOUSNESS?**

July 13, 1963, a day prior to the Master's Mahasamadhi, Gurudev appeared to be in a mood to speak. Doctor Mother ventured to open a conversation: "Swamiji, you were unconscious for four, five days." Gurudev simply nodded. Doctor Mother then said, "Swamiji was semi-conscious for another four, five days." Once again, Gurudev just nodded, as if to say, "Hum?" Then finally, Swami Hridayanandaji asked Gurudev, "Swamiji, does Swamiji know since how many days Swamiji is in bed?" Gurudev immediately replied, "Twenty days." Doctor Mother Hridayanandaji, and others with her, were astounded at the accuracy of Gurudev's reply. "How could an unconscious or semi-conscious person know the exact number of days he had been in bed?" they wondered. Once again Gurudev had proved that he was far, far beyond the reach of the human intellect, vastly beyond our comprehension.

### **HE KNEW HIS CONDITION BETTER THAN ALL DOCTORS**

It was July 13, After having two or three motions, Gurudev was feeling weak. When Doctor Mother asked him how he felt, Gurudev replied, "Anti-, anti-." What is anti-, Swamiji?" asked the puzzled Hridayanandaji, and Gurudev replied "Opposite".

July 13, Saturday night. About 9 P.M., electric massage was being administered to Gurudev. The machine made a croaking sound as it worked. Swamiji commented: "You see, frog is crying!" People around Gurudev were sad over the Master's health, but they could not help a smile at Swamiji's remark.

A close disciple of Gurudev came there. He was not wearing his shirt at the time and his stomach was rather bulging. Gurudev saw him and jocularly exclaimed, "Oh, put the machine on his belly!"

Gurudev's mood became a little serious, however, when the doctors began to apply the electric massage to Swamiji's face. Overtired as he was, Gurudev said, "Enough, enough". His comment at that moment revealed extreme Virakti. He wanted nothing. After all, what could all the doctors in the world do when the call had come to him?

### **ALL IS DONE .... FOR ONCE LET ME RELAX**

It was the night of Saturday, July 13, less than twenty-four hours before Mahasamadhi. Gurudev had already had eight or nine motions and free urination. His stomach was empty and he was completely relaxed. Devanandaji saw Gurudev lying like a child, tapping the pillow with the fingers of his right hand. Or he moved his right palm lightly on his stomach in gentle circles. He had nothing to do now. His work was already done.

## LOVE UNTO THE LAST

It was Brahmamuhurta, about 3:30 on the morning of July 14. Gurudev was having hiccough. Swami Kalyananandaji, who was on duty and sitting behind Gurudev, went near and asked, "Swamiji, may I bring a little water for Swamiji to drink?" Gurudev replied, "Not necessary now. We shall see afterwards." And he began to talk to Kalyan Swamiji. There was a short conversation.

Gurudev: How many people are around, apart from you?"

Swami K: None else, Swamiji.

Gurudev: How many Asans do you know?

Swami K: Eighteen, Swamiji.

Gurudev: Not eighty?

Swami K: No, Swamiji.

Gurudev: Where are the other people?

Swami K: They are all sleeping in the verandah, Swamiji.

Gurudev: Who are all there?

Swami K: May I mention the names, Swamiji?

Gurudev nodded and Kalyan Swamiji mentioned the names. Doctor Mother, Santanandaji, Satya Gyanam Swamiji, Narayanaswamiji, Devanandaji, Gopalakrishnanji and Bhimsenji were all in the verandah. Gurudev listened attentively and then asked, "Where are you taking your food?" "In the *Langar*, Swamiji." "Not here?" asked Gurudev. "No, Swamiji." "What will all do for food?" asked the child-like Sivananda, anxious for the Ashram inmates even on his last day. Swami Kalyananandaji assured Gurudev: "*Langar* is working as usual, Swamiji. The bell rings as always. All take food." Gurudev was satisfied. More than a year after holy Gurudev's Mahasamadhi, the *Langar* bell still rings in the Sivanandaashram, twice daily, as always, and all take food.

When a Sage is satisfied, then how can anything go wrong?

### **"I HAVE MANY THINGS TO DO!" .... AND SO HE LIVES EVEN TODAY**

On July 14, Col. Puri came to examine Swamiji. As he was tapping Gurudev with his rod to test the reflexes, Swamiji commented: "Doctors are very cruel." "Yes, Swamiji. What can be done? That's our duty" said Dr. Puri and added, "Swamiji, you'll be all-right shortly." "Yes, I must. I have many things to do" said the Master, revealing in those few words his inborn optimism and his unquenchable desire to serve people. When Gurudev had made the above comment, Col. Puri told Swamiji, "You'll do, Swamiji, but with handicap." Gurudev heard the doctor's words clearly and gave him a steady look. Those who know Gurudev intimately say that Swamiji must have made up his mind at that fateful moment to give up the fetter of the physical body, so very subject to illness and deterioration. Be that

as it may, Gurudev with his never-failing hospitality saw to it that the doctor was given *Uppuma*, coffee, and books, and gave him a sweet farewell with a “*Om Namo Narayanaya*”.

### **GIVE ME MY LAST DRINK! THE MASTER'S ETERNAL LOVE FOR MOTHER GANGES**

On July 14, after Col. Puri had left and before he could take his own food, Gurudev developed a sudden shivering and fever. Breathing became hard. He took a bare two or three spoonfuls of ‘Horlicks’ and about two-thirty or three in the afternoon, he asked for a little water to drink. As was the usual practice, those who were attending on Gurudev wanted to give him Barley Water or Jeera Water, but this time Gurudev wanted Ganges water, pure and simple. The water was brought; and Swamiji, who had experienced difficulty in taking even the smallest quantity of solid or liquid, gulped down a half-glassful of Ganges water without apparent trouble. Even before Gurudev drank this water, urine and motion had stopped. It is just possible that Gurudev had cleared his physical sheath of all waste matter by self-willed diarrhoea before he took holy Ganges with love and devotion. What is not possible for saints and sages?

### **PRINTING OF THE POPULAR SECOND EDITION OF SWAMI SIVANANDA'S “BLISS DIVINE”**

Those who have had the privilege to go through Gurudev's book “Bliss Divine” will be aware of its extraordinary value not only to the spiritual seeker, but also to every person who wants to lead a fuller, happier life. “Bliss Divine” is not just another book by the Master, but contains the very essence of all his other works and writings. It is a book for all time.

The thousand copies of the first edition of “Bliss Divine” having been exhausted, we are making arrangements to bring out a popular second edition, with several additional topics and priced at Rupees Ten only, possibly by March next. For a book of this size (pp. 520, demi 8vo.), we can keep the price down to this level only if we print a large number of copies at a time. (It will be remembered that the deluxe first edition was priced at Rs. 15- per copy). Moreover, for economic and technical reasons, it will not be feasible for the Ashram's Printing Press to print a thousand or two thousand copies of this book again and again at frequent intervals. Since the book has already made a mark in the world of spiritual literature and there is likely to be a steady and growing demand for it, we are now contemplating to print a larger number of copies in our second edition.

While we are separately booking advance orders for copies of this second edition, the fund that may be able to raise in that way may cover only a fraction of our needs. We are, therefore, making this appeal to philanthropic-minded people to come forward to help in printing this second edition of “Bliss Divine”. It will be possible for us to print 100 copies of the book against a donation of Rs. 300- only. For 250 copies it would be Rs. 750-, for 500 copies Rs. 1,500-, for 1,000 copies Rs. 3,000-. The donor's name will be printed in the respective number of copies in recognition of his or her service and six such copies will be sent to the donor.

You are welcome to donate any sum less than Rs. 300- also; such sum will be utilised for the printing of the book “Bliss Divine”. But, in the case of those who donate sums lesser than Rs. 300-, it will not be possible for us either to print their names in the book or to send them complimentary copies thereof.

We feel sure, that in this our noble endeavour to bring Gurudev’s most precious book to a wide and thirsting public, we will have the enthusiastic support of the devotees of Gurudev, the well-wishers of the Divine Life Society and all those philanthropic-minded people who are interested in the moral and spiritual uplift of mankind. You are welcome to write for further particulars to:

The General Secretary,  
The Divine Life Society,  
P.O. Sivanandanagar—249 192,  
Dist. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand,  
Himalayas. INDIA.



Cursory Note: This was the cost and price in 1965 when this was published. This Internet Edition is being brought out in April, 2005.